



## SUMMARY OF THE GOLFRSA HANDICAPPING RULES FOR MEN AND WOMEN

Effective from 3 September 2018

Note: The full GolfRSA Rules Manual can be viewed on either [www.golfrsa.co.za](http://www.golfrsa.co.za) or [www.handicaps.co.za](http://www.handicaps.co.za).

### SEPTEMBER 2018 HANDICAP RULE CHANGES

The 2018 Golf RSA Handicap Rules Manual has been changed where necessary to give effect to the adoption of the USGA Course Rating System, including Slope. No other changes have been made to the Handicap Rules in operation up until 3 September 2018.

### PURPOSE

#### *Essence of the System*

The aim of the GolfRSA Handicap System is to allow golfers of differing abilities to compete against one another.

GolfRSA presents this Handicap System in the conviction that, when faithfully operated, it results in an equitable Handicap Index no matter where golfers live and play.

### DEFINITIONS

#### *Course Handicap*

A "Course Handicap" is the number of handicap strokes a player receives from a particular set of tees at the course being played.

To convert a Handicap Index to a Course Handicap, a player uses their Handicap Index to look up on the Course Handicap Conversion Table available at their club, on the club terminal, or HNA phone app, to find their appropriate Course Handicap. Each set of rated tees will have a different Course Handicap Conversion Table for men and women based on its Slope Rating and Course Rating and adjustment to Par. It is the player's responsibility to determine the correct Course Handicap, and to know the holes at which handicap strokes are to be given or received. (See sample Course Handicap Conversion Table in section 3.5.)

A player's Course Handicap is determined by multiplying a Handicap Index by the Slope Rating of the course played before dividing it by 113 and then adding the Course Rating and deducting the Par of the course. The resulting figure is rounded off to the nearest whole number (.5 or more is rounded upward).

Course Handicap = Handicap Index x Slope Rating of the Course /113 + (Course Rating - Par)

#### *Course Handicap Conversion Table*

A "Course Handicap Conversion Table" is a chart that converts a Handicap Index to a Course Handicap based on the Slope Rating for a specific set of tees and the adjustment to Par.

### Course Handicap Conversion Table

#### EXAMPLE ONLY – NOT ACCURATE

CLUB NAME: ABC GOLF CLUB TEES: Back /Yellow  
Slope Rating: 140 USGA Course Rating: 72.7 Par 72

**For: Men**

Handicap Index	Course Handicap	Handicap Index	Course Handicap
+3.6 to +2.9	+4	16.6 to 17.3	21
+2.8 to +2.1	+3	17.4 to 18.1	22
+2.0 to +1.3	+2	18.2 to 18.9	23
+1.2 to +.5	+1	19.0 to 19.7	24
+.4 to .4	0	19.8 to 20.5	25
.5 to 1.2	1	20.6 to 21.3	26
1.3 to 2.0	2	21.4 to 22.1	27
2.1 to 2.8	3	22.2 to 23.0	28
2.9 to 3.6	4	23.1 to 23.8	29
3.7 to 4.4	5	23.9 to 24.6	30
4.5 to 5.2	6	24.7 to 25.4	31
5.3 to 6.0	7	25.5 to 26.2	32
6.1 to 6.8	8	26.3 to 27.0	33
6.9 to 7.6	9	27.1 to 27.8	34
7.7 to 8.4	10	27.9 to 28.6	35
8.5 to 9.2	11	28.7 to 29.4	36
9.3 to 10.0	12	29.5 to 30.2	37
10.1 to 10.8	13	30.3 to 31.0	38
10.9 to 11.7	14	31.1 to 31.8	39
11.8 to 12.5	15	31.9 to 32.6	40
12.6 to 13.3	16	32.7 to 33.4	41
13.4 to 14.1	17	33.5 to 34.3	42
14.2 to 14.9	18	34.4 to 35.1	43
15.0 to 15.7	19	35.2 to 35.9	44
15.8 to 16.5	20	36.0 to 36.4	45

**INSTRUCTIONS**

When using the table, find the range containing the Handicap Index in the left column. The Course Handicap is the corresponding number in the right column.

The table above is a sample. Make sure that the table you use is for the tees that you play for a particular round, and for the appropriate gender.



### ***Exceptional Score***

An “*Exceptional Score*” is highlighted on the players scoring records when the particular differential is 3 or more strokes below their Handicap Index at the time the round was played.

### ***Adjusted Gross Score***

An “*Adjusted Gross Score*” is a player’s Gross Score adjusted as per the GolfRSA Handicap System procedure for unfinished holes, conceded strokes, holes not played or not played under the Rules of Golf or an adjusted maximum score on any hole.

### ***Handicap Index***

A “*Handicap Index*” is the USGA's service mark used to indicate a measurement of a player's potential ability on a course of standard playing difficulty. It is expressed as a number taken to one decimal place (e.g. 10.4) and is used for conversion to a Course Handicap.

### ***Handicap Differential***

A “*Handicap Differential*” is the difference between a player’s Adjusted Gross Score and the Course Rating of the tee from which the player played, multiplied by 113/Slope Rating.

### ***Handicap Stroke Hole***

A “*Handicap Stroke Hole*” is a hole at which a player applies a handicap stroke (or strokes) to their Gross Score for that hole to determine a Net Score for the hole. The order in which handicap strokes (from 1 to 18) are allocated to the holes of the course should be shown on the scorecard.

### ***Most Likely Score***

A “*Most Likely Score*” is the score a player would most likely have achieved if they started the hole but did not complete the hole, or if a player conceded a stroke. This should be calculated as to the number of strokes already taken plus the number of strokes the player was most likely to have achieved more than 50% of the time.

### ***Net Score***

A “*Net Score*” is a player’s score after their Gross Score has been adjusted by their Course Handicap.

### ***No Return (N/R)***

An N/R must be entered in the system where a round was not acceptable for handicap purposes as detailed below.

### ***Penalty Scores***

Players have 72 hours in which to enter a score after the completion of their round. Any scores returned after this 72-hour period will result in a “*Penalty Score*” being allocated to the player’s profile.

### ***Slope Rating***

A “*Slope Rating*” is the USGA's mark that indicates the measurement of the relative difficulty of a course for players who are not Scratch Golfers compared to the USGA Course Rating (e.g., compared to the difficulty of a course for Scratch Golfers). A Slope Rating is computed from the difference between the Bogey Rating and the USGA Course Rating. The lowest Slope Rating is 55 and the highest is 155. A golf course of standard playing difficulty has a Slope Rating of 113.

### ***Scratch Golfer***

A “*Scratch Golfer*” is a player who can play to the Course Rating from any set of tees. For handicapping purposes, it is defined as a player with a Handicap Index of 0.0.



### **Course Rating (CR)**

A "USGA Course Rating" is the USGA's mark that indicates the evaluation of the playing difficulty of a course for a Scratch Golfer under normal course and weather conditions. It is expressed as strokes taken to one decimal place, and is based on metres and other obstacles to the extent that they affect the scoring ability of a Scratch Golfer.

## **SCORES ACCEPTABLE**

### **All scores**

Scores must be entered on the GolfRSA Handicapping System for all 18-hole and 9-hole rounds except for rounds not acceptable as detailed below.

### **Maximum score on any hole**

The maximum score on a hole for Course Handicaps up to 18 is 2 over Par. Where a player has two handicap strokes on a hole, the maximum score allowed on the hole is 3 over Par. Where a player has 3 handicap strokes on a hole, the maximum score allowed on the hole would be 4 over Par.

Players should, where possible, complete every hole regardless of their partner's or their opposition's score. Where a player does not complete a hole, they should record their Most Likely Score.

### **Unfinished Holes, Conceded Strokes**

A player who starts but does not finish a hole or is conceded a stroke must record the Most Likely Score they would have achieved. The number of strokes most likely to have been achieved should not exceed the maximum allowed on each hole as detailed in section 5.3 above.

### **Scores not acceptable**

Scores made under the following conditions are not acceptable for handicap purposes and should not be entered in any form in the player's scoring record:

- a) When the score cannot be ratified by a playing partner or competitor
- b) When the types or number of clubs are limited (as in a competition in which only iron clubs are allowed).
- c) When the round played includes the use of "Mulligans"
- d) Competition Match Play Rounds
- e) When more than one ball is used at a time
- f) When the course played is not officially rated including when a course is set up much longer or shorter than the Average Playing Length when the rating of the course was determined
- g) When the player uses non-conforming clubs, balls or tees, or with respect to Rule 14-3 (Rules of Golf) where an artificial device is used in the execution of stroke or when equipment is used in an unusual manner during the execution of a stroke

## **HANDICAP DIFFERENTIALS**

### **Calculation of Differentials**

A Differential is computed from four elements: Adjusted Gross Score, USGA Course Rating, Slope Rating, and 113 (the Slope Rating of a course of standard difficulty). To determine the Differential, subtract the USGA Course Rating from the Adjusted Gross Score, multiply the difference by 113, and divide the resulting number by the Slope Rating. Round the final number to the nearest tenth (one decimal).

$$\text{Differential} = (\text{Adjusted Gross Score} - \text{USGA Course Rating}) \times 113 / \text{Slope Rating}$$

## HOW TO COMPUTE A HANDICAP INDEX

### ***Handicap Index Formula***

The Handicap Index formula is based on the best Differential(s) in a player's scoring record. If a player's scoring record contains 20 scores, the best 10 Differentials of the most recent 20 are used to calculate the Handicap Index.

As the number of scores in the scoring record decreases, the percentage of scores used in a scoring record decreases from the maximum of the best 50 percent. If the scoring record contains 9 or 10 scores, only the best three scores (30 to 33 percent) in the scoring record will be used. Thus, the accuracy of a player's Handicap Index is directly proportional to the number of acceptable scores posted.

A Handicap Index must not be issued to a player who has returned fewer than five acceptable scores.

The Handicap Index computation will be managed by the GolfRSA Handicap Server. Those players wishing to perform an approximate check may do so as follows:

**Step 1:** Use the table below to determine the number of Differential(s) to use:

Number of Acceptable Scores	Differential(s) to be Used
5 or 6	Lowest 1
7 or 8	Lowest 2
9 or 10	Lowest 3
11 or 12	Lowest 4
13 or 14	Lowest 5
15 or 16	Lowest 6
17	Lowest 7
18	Lowest 8
19	Lowest 9
20	Lowest 10

**Step 2:** Select the number of differentials from the above table

**Step 3:** Average these to obtain an intermediate Handicap Index accurate to one decimal place.

**Step 4:** Apply the Bonus of Excellence (currently 0.96) factor applicable to the intermediate Handicap Index to one decimal place. This result is known as the player's Handicap Index.

Handicap Index = Average of the lowest valid differentials x 0.96

### ***Exceptional performance calculation***

Where a player has two or more Exceptional Scores among their last 20 rounds, the player's Handicap Index will be calculated using the lowest 8 differentials, instead of the lowest 10.

A player's Handicap Index will be immediately recalculated when a second Exceptional Score is entered on the system, and for any additional Exceptional Scores for as long as there are 2 or more in their last 20 scores.

### ***Nine-Hole Score Entry***

Nine-hole Adjusted Gross Scores are to be entered on the GolfRSA Handicap System where 9 or more holes (see section 8.3 for incomplete rounds) have been completed. The system will use the player's Adjusted Gross Score for the 9 holes played and then add Par for the second nine, plus half the player's Course Handicap rounded down, to give an 18-hole Adjusted Gross Score. This Adjusted Gross Score will then be converted into a Differential using the formula as detailed above.

### ***Incomplete Rounds***

If a player completes 13 or more holes, the player must post an 18-hole score. If more than 9 but less than 12 holes are played, the player must post a nine-hole score. Scores for unplayed holes must be recorded as Par plus any handicap strokes that the player is entitled to receive on the unplayed holes.

### ***Nine Hole Scores and 72 Hour Penalty***

Nine-hole scores entered on the system are not considered when calculating Exceptional Scores but they will result in a late score entry Penalty, if the score is entered more than 72 hours after the 9 holes has been completed.

### ***Time limit on entering scores***

A score should be returned on the same day as the round was played but no later than 72 hours after completion of a round. The period of 72 hours is taken from 21:00 on the day of play to 21:00 three days later. Scores not returned during this period, will result in a Penalty Score being entered on the player's behalf. Such scores are not to be deleted or modified by the player's home club, unless exceptional circumstances warrant such action. A player is obliged to enter a score on the system before another round is played.

### ***Penalty Scores***

A Penalty Score is the lowest differential of the player's last 20 recorded scores, or such penalty as the club handicapper may decide, based on the circumstances around the failure of the player to enter the score. Where the late entered score is equal to or lower than the lowest of the player's last 20 differentials, the system will allocate 1 Penalty stroke for Handicap Indexes below 4, and 20% of the player's Handicap Index for Handicap Indexes above 4 to a maximum of 4 strokes, and email the details to the club for the handicapper to review and adjust where necessary.

### ***Handicap Index Calculations***

Handicap Indexes will be automatically computed from 10 PM each day. Players are advised to confirm their Handicap Indexes on either the club terminal, [www.handicaps.co.za](http://www.handicaps.co.za) website, or the HNA Handicap App prior to each round, as Handicap Indexes may have been adjusted overnight or due to an exceptional performance trigger.

## **HANDICAP REVISIONS**

### ***Frequency of Revisions***

In order to be equitable, Handicap Indexes must always be kept up to date, and are revised daily at 4am. Although players are allowed 72 hours after completing a round to record a score, this period should not be used to delay score entry when the club terminal is operational. Clubs are encouraged to make it a condition of their competitions that all scores should have been entered at the end of a round and prior to the start of any further round.

### ***Foreign Visitors with a Handicap Index***

Players from other countries may present their Handicap Index certificates, to a club when entering a competition and play off the Course Handicap as determined by the Course Handicap Conversion Table.

### ***Neighbouring Country Visitors on the HNA system***

Players from clubs in neighbouring countries that are on the HNA system, but have not yet had their courses rated using the USGA Course Rating System including Slope, have handicap indexes on the HNA system that have been created using a standard slope of 113. Their handicap index will be displayed on the system with a zero after the decimal place. These players should play off their handicaps calculated in the same manner as detailed below, for Foreign Visitors without a Handicap Index.

### ***Foreign Visitors without a Handicap Index***

Where a player is visiting from a country where the USGA Slope system is not in use and they do not have a Handicap Index, i.e visitors from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, their handicap should be adjusted to Par depending on the tee they are playing, and the Competition organising committee should announce the method of Course Handicap calculation for non-affiliated golfers.

Course Handicap for Foreign Handicap Players without a Handicap Index = Foreign Handicap + ( Course Rating - Par)